

## **Incline group wants to oust assessor**



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Maryanne Ingemanson is the leader of the Village League to Save Incline Assets, which filed legal papers Wednesday to remove Washoe County Assessor Robert McGowan from office, alleging malfeasance of office, a charge McGowan says is false. Ingemanson is shown March 25 at her Incline Village home. She and her husband bought the lakefront property in 1961.

**By Susan Voyles**

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A property-tax revolt group in Incline Village filed legal papers Wednesday to remove Washoe County Assessor Robert McGowan, alleging malfeasance of office, a charge the 23-year officeholder says is totally false.

Washoe District Judge Jerry Polaha on Friday will set a hearing date on the civil lawsuit. Under state law setting up such procedures, the hearing must be held within 20 days.

Maryanne Ingemanson, leader of the Village League to Save Incline Assets, said the most "egregious dereliction of duty" is McGowan's refusal to follow state tax commission rules adopted Aug. 4, 2004, that affect real estate values in Incline Village.

McGowan said his office follows the rules, including the use of multiplying factors and sampling property sales to adjust property values for the current tax year.

"Honestly, I am perplexed by it," McGowan said.

McGowan said the huge demand - and prices paid - for Incline Village homes is the culprit.

Taxable land values are based on rising real estate prices.

"They pay horrendous taxes," he said. "It has been onerous. But it was done according to the law."

He said people should be happy with a new state tax law that caps property-tax increases on homes at no more than 3 percent a year.

The group fought for two years for the new rules that primarily involve how land is valued for taxes. State rules require assessors to gauge the view of properties from the ground of where a building could be built, eliminate the use of views as the main way to value parcels and forbid assessors from putting all of a property's tax value in land if they have reason to believe the house will be torn down. And assessors can no longer go back more than three years to find comparable sales in valuing land.

The Incline Village group won an 8 percent reduction on land values from the county Board of Equalization in February after the board found the assessor did not use the new rules in assessing property.

McGowan appealed the board decision to the state tax commission, which re-imposed the 8 percent boost in August. But the Incline group lawsuit claims he did not appeal the ruling and that he failed to follow the new rules, issued as county appraisers had completed their work for the current tax year.

The group's lawsuit also claims McGowan did not fully assess personal property, such as furniture, for businesses because he did not require them to use state tax department forms to detail the items.

McGowan said he never was ordered to use the forms. But his office now is requiring businesses to detail personal property because of a new state law putting an 8 percent cap on businesses.

"We thought it was an extra burden on taxpayers," McGowan said. He added that the state's review of his office's work has found his property values to be accurate.